



## Mick's Musings

### Treasures(?) of the Deep

The atmosphere here at MOWS Towers has been a little down-beat of late. What with the ON/OFF/ON/Oh no it's off again EA to CRT waterway transfer and the temporary withdrawal of our boat dock planning application (see page 2).

So it falls upon me, I feel, to try and lighten the mood a little, with some cautionary tales of canal and river clean-ups and things that the general public cast into the depths ... allegedly. Unless, of course, there's a c\*\*p fairy that chucks the stuff in at the dead of night.

What never fails to amaze me is the sheer variety of "dumped" items. From the sinister knotted black bin liner (kittens perhaps?) to expensive trainers - sadly never in pairs. From every make and size of vehicle tyre ever made, through to road signs, traffic cones (a perpetual favourite) bicycles and scooters. Big, small, old and new, we've recovered them all.

For the aficionado of these events, I recall that one particular clean-up on the Loughborough Canal yielded not only a ten-pin bowling ball (complete with bag) but an ancient sawn off shotgun, which I felt duty bound to take to the local police station. Dripping with black silt and weed (the weapon not me, silly) was conveyed as far as the main door, when the desk sergeant bellowed, "I don't care what it is, take it round the back!" thus saving a mess on his brand new carpet tiles.

But for sheer audaciousness, I remember an expedition in our narrowboat to Ellesmere Port, via the River Soar, Trent and Mersey, Staffs and Worcester and Shropshire Union canals. This journey entails travelling through the heart of Chester, a beautiful place to visit you would agree. Imagine our horror when, rounding a corner we were confronted by a relatively new armchair floating merrily along. Dodging that we soon came across the match to the pair, also floating along oblivious to the boat traffic, and finally in the shadow of Chester's historic walls, the matching settee. A three piece! (Where's your mate with his van when you need him?). Well enough excitement for one day you might think? But no! Another contender for Chogyams law\* came a mile later when the boat bodily rose up in the water, made a sickening grinding noise and fell with a resounding splash as we skidded over the roof of - a white saloon car. I kid you not. Whether any submariner remained inside we did not stop to look, but pressed on for Tower Wharf and the relative safety of the pub.

So next time you see us out and about on "Badger" retrieving these treasures of the deep, say a little thank you to this countries "dumpers" without whom of course, we would be out of a job!

\*Chogyams law states that "the worse it is at the time, the better story it makes when you get back".  
How true!

*Mick*  
Mick Clowes

# Work Party News

The work to clear the river downstream of Wilton Bridge continues unabated, with good progress being made. Next time you are in the location, why not have a look? The edge has been cut to follow the line of posts put in some years ago, and should result in a neat looking finish with good water depth, improving the flow and therefore the water quality.

Travelling from Sysonby to the work site at the aforementioned bridge, our group were waylaid by a householder who asked if we could assist in raising a sunken boat which was adjacent the rear of his property. Always happy to help we managed to grab it with the bucket on "Mole" and lift it sufficiently to let others on "Badger" scrape out about half a ton of silt, using spades. Much lighter now, we continued to lift only to have the fibre glass side tear away and the boat re-sink. Several grabs later we obtained a firm hold and "Badger" was floated underneath and the sunken boat was gently lower on. It was then driven away to be disposed of. The crowd that had gathered gave us a round of applause and the grateful householder made a donation to the society. A good day's work!



## Boat Dock Proposals Temporarily Withdrawn

The society has long desired to locate its two workboats closer to the action in the centre of Melton. This would avoid the time consuming journey from our present base, save on fuel and therefore cut down on pollution. It would also mean we would be on hand to react to say, for example, a fallen tree around the parks "ring" and have the boats close to the slipway for transportation elsewhere.

To this end we have recently applied for planning permission to build a double boat dock adjacent our slipway at the rear of Wilton Road car park. The application raised hackles amongst the scouts whose parents duteously e-mailed the council. As more than five comments were received it was due to go to the planning committee, who will expect an ecology survey. As certain species are not "in season" as it were, to be hunted, we have had to withdraw our application for the present time. We expect the survey to be completed in around three months and the application to be re-submitted then, with the building work to follow after that.

# Oakham Update

Our work at the Oakham end covers 4 core themes:

1. Preservation - We monitor (and will oppose) planning applications which impact the line of the canal.
2. Accessibility - We are in dialogue with the various canal owners between Oakham and Rocks by Rail to see if we can increase public access. Subject to success here, we will push further north with our efforts.
3. Conservation - We are working with a number of parties to create a long term maintenance strategy for the Springfield section in Oakham. This is an exciting project through which we hope to get local residents involved and create some much needed publicity. We are also supporting the Oakham Angling Society work parties at Ashwell.
4. Awareness - We have a new permanent display at Rocks by Rail and attend most of their major events. We will also be having an exhibition at the Market Overton Feast Weekend on 27 June. We are in the process of finalising an 'Oakham Canal Trail' leaflet, following the line of the canal from Oakham to Melton. We hope to get some exposure in the local press and on radio once it is launched.

If you would like to get involved in these or our future Oakham Canal projects, contact Paul at [pdadford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pdadford@yahoo.co.uk).

## Syston Hub News

Revised plans for the Hub are now being drawn up. At a recent committee meeting a working party consisting of committee members Mike Handford, Hugh Butler, Peter Samways and Paul Dadford, was formed to consider these plans and advise on future action. Earlier this year, a presentation was given to the Chairman of Syston Town Council and the Syston Town Manager. As a result, Councillor John Lillie was appointed to liaise with our committee and ensure co-operation between the Council and MOWS in developing the Syston Hub.

## Have Your Say!



This newsletter hopefully keeps the membership informed of all the latest developments. But if you have anything to say, concerning the society or its work, that you would like to share with others, please let the editor know. You can use e- or snail-mail and we will do our best to include it in our next edition.



# New Committee Members Required!

We are looking for one or two new committee members to join our happy throng. We meet once every six weeks or so, on a Monday evening. It's usually quite a short meeting, starting at 7.30pm and usually lasting between one and two hours. The meeting is held at Sysonby Knoll Hotel, so the venue is just on the outskirts of Melton.



If you think you may like to join us, but would like more information or to 'try before you buy', so to speak, and come along to one of our meetings, please contact chairman Mick (contact details below). We would certainly appreciate some younger blood and new ideas on our committee.

## Can Anyone Spare An Hour or Two?

We are also appealing for a few volunteers to help out at the three events we are attending.

- Braunston Historic Boat Gathering in Northamptonshire on Saturday 27 & Sunday 28 June. **Free entry.**
- Melton Day on Sunday 28 June.
- Rempstone Steam Rally on Saturday 11 & Sunday 12 July. **Free tickets.**

We realise that the first venue is a bit of a distance to travel but well worth a visit. The other two are very local. We would very much appreciate if anyone can spare us a little of your time to help at any of these events. Please contact either Mick Clowes on 01509 414140 or Richard Nicholson on 01664 813084.

## Subscription Renewals - Reminder

It's been a few months since subscription renewal reminders were sent out to members. Thank you to those who have paid. We greatly appreciate that you have remained members and give us your support.

... But just a gentle reminder to those who have not yet got round to it. We all know how easy it is to just ... well, forget ... so reminders are always useful.



## Welcome To New Members ...

Carol Andow  
Eric Bussingham  
Debbie, Sean & Chloe Dawson

Jeremy Hall  
Allan & Veronica Hird

## Society Contacts:

**Chairman:** Michael Clowes  
Tel: 01509 414140  
e-mail: mowschairman@gmail.com  
or lindandmick@btinternet.com

**Secretary and Acting Treasurer:**  
Richard Booth  
e-mail: richard@sysonby.com

**Newsletters:** Linda Hulme  
Tel: 01509 414140  
e-mail: lindandmick@btinternet.com

**Web Administrator:** Nick Cooke  
e-mail: mowswebmaster@gmail.com

**Website:**  
<http://www.meltonwaterways.co.uk>